Kinder Than He Seems

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by WrittenKinzy18

Summary

Error is the Destroyer of the AUs. The sole purpose of his existence is to clash with Ink and destroy the entire multiverse. He has two easy ways of doing so: finding the Doodle Sphere, or killing the Classic Universe. No one wants to get rid of him completely, but they also can't let him roam free.

However, when Classic himself is brought into their multiversal meeting, they find Error has always known where the Original Undertale was. In fact, he'd been actively visiting it as a friend.

Were they really so wrong about the Destroyer?

Notes

I'm shit with POV I'm so sorry. Half of this is Classic, the other half is mostly Ink lmao.

There isn't any shipping, but I'm a sucker for Errorink so there's hints to it here and there. :D

See the end of the work for more notes

The multiverse was something he'd *definitely* need to get used to.

It was one thing knowing there were a bunch of alternate versions based off of you and another thing entirely to *actually* see it in person.

This was the first time Sans — or Classic, as he'd been nicknamed by Blue — had been invited to a multiverse meeting with a group of very similar skeletons. He didn't know anyone here (besides some vague descriptions and short stories he'd been told), but it was clear these meetings had been going on for a very long time. All these alternate Sanses were incredibly chummy with each other, even the ones that seemed dark and brooding.

And then there was him: brought in by the supposed "Star Sanses" then immediately left to his own devices while the others talked around the room.

Really, "meeting" was a strong term. There was no large table with chairs lining every side, Ink and Dream, clear leaders of the bunch, sitting on either end while they talked their business. There wasn't any notes being taken or really any kind of order to the conversation at all. No, they all sat around outside what he assumed was Ink's house, claiming their own spots either on the ground, on the roof, or in random chairs and bean bags that, for some reason, were outside as well. The place itself was fairly distracting, at least to this newcomer. It was hard to pay attention when he could look at the teal grass, golden and white sky, or the many floating purple islands with seemingly infinite waterfalls.

It was also hard to pay attention while everyone is shouting at each other.

"He's destroyed *three universes* in just one day!" a red eyed skeleton

yelled from his lazy position slumped on a red bean bag. His black hoodie framed with yellow fur was laid out on his lap as he glared at the artist. “Three, Ink! How the fuck is that okay?!”

“It’s not okay,” Dream said softly, sitting properly in an overly fancy deck rocking chair. “No one said it was okay, Red.”

“Well ya sure aren’t doin’ shit about it!”

“He’s definitely gotten more violent,” another voice piped up. This one had a purple and teal vest on and some very tight black pants. He was laying on his stomach in the grass, head propped up on his fingerless-gloved hand while the other one fiddled with the grass. Another skeleton sat beside him, looking exactly like Classic but with sneakers and his hood up. Those sparkly purple eyes trailed up to the yellow skeleton. “He’s destroyed Underlust at least four times in the last month. Sooner or later the Creators aren’t gonna bring us back again.”

“He’s visited Outertale too many times to count,” a starry blue and yellow Sans said, looking a little anxious but not scared. He was floating besides the red one’s bean bag. “I know he’s probably not gonna do anything there yet because he likes looking at the stars, but it’s still a little unnerving to see the Destroyer just chillin’ in your AU.”

“We know, guys,” Blue joined, standing nearest to Classic. He was wringing his hands nervously. “We’re doing our best, but we can’t just… *kill* him.”

The red one — Classic already forgot his name — snapped his glare towards the smaller skeleton and growled. “Why the hell not? He’s killed thousands of us!” He gestured around himself. “Look around, Blue! Who the *fuck* is missing?!”

Blue bowed his head a bit. “Razz…”

“Exactly! *And* King! ‘Cause that cocksucker fucking kill-“

“He’ll be back, though!” Surprisingly, Blue returned the other’s harsh glare. “Razz and King will come back when the Creators and Ink bring them back! You can’t… You can’t blame the Destroyer for it all! He’s bad, and he’s made mistakes, but he’s a good person! I know it!”

“I dunno about *good* person,” a skeleton draped in a misty black robe said, laying back as he floated between the two heated skeletons, “but I mean, *you* can’t exactly lecture anyone on *killing people*, Red.”

“Like you can say shit! You’re *literally* death!”

“Yes, but I don’t technically kill them. Just take what’s already dead. And quite of few of that has been from your hands.” He turned empty eye sockets Red’s way, giving a teasing smirk. “You’ve got *killer* tendencies…”

“Shut the fuck up, you grim reaper reject! I don’t demolish entire universes in one go!”

“How am I a grim reaper reject if I literally *am* the grim reaper? Not one of your best insults, kiddo.”

“FUCK OFF!”

“Stars, can we go one meeting without arguing about this?” Dream muttered, running his hands down his face. Ink hummed his agreement from the floor beside him, still staring intently at his sketchbook. As far as Classic could tell, he hadn’t actually drawn anything yet. Maybe he was staring at an old sketch?

“You haven’t talked much, Ink darling.” The purple one kicked up his feet and tilted his head. “Yet you’ve looked troubled the whole time. What’s on your mind?”

Ink’s mismatched blue and purple eyes flicked up to the other. He made a contemplative face. “Just… thinking about it. I talked to him not long ago, and I thought we reached some sort of… I dunno, understanding? He was less violent. I just want to know why he’d do this so quickly afterward…”

“’Cause he’s crazy?” a winged Sans pointed out unhelpfully from his spot lounging on the roof of the house.

“’Cause he’s a psychopathic murderer that only cares about killin’ and makin’ our live difficult,” Red grumbled, crossing his arms.

“That’s not true!” Blue yelled. Really, Classic was starting to wonder how these two could stand each other at all. Wasn’t Red one of the skeletons Blue insisted was a friend and that he just *had* to meet him? “He cares about a lot of things! He likes stars, like Comet said! And he likes Candytale and Sugartale for their sweets! And he hasn’t touched your AU in a while because he likes the spicy chocolate you have there!”

“Wha- that’s not why he hasn’t touched my universe! He stole that shit like twice! He just knows I’ll kick his ass!”

“No, it’s the chocolate,” Ink admitted, smirking his way. His eyelights changed to a green star and an orange swirl. “He specifically said so when we talked.”

“Bullshit! How can you remember shit like that but not what you ate for fucking lunch?!”

“He likes parts of the multiverse!” the blue skeleton insisted, ignoring the new argument between artist and edgy-boy. “I’m sure he has a reason! If he wasn’t good, he wouldn’t have let me go!”

“Shut up, Berry,” Red grumbled, though he looked more pacified than five seconds ago. “You got Stockholm’s syndrome er somethin’.”

“That’s not it!”

“Okay Okay,” the purple skeleton sat up, putting out their hands towards both monsters and shifting to sit cross legged. “Ladies, you’re both pretty. Now let’s not argue about this again, alright?” He turned to Red. “I know you’re scared or whatever, but don’t take it out on us.” Before Red could yell his protests, the other turned to Blue. “We know you don’t wanna kill him. Honestly, I don’t either. But we do have to do something about this before any real damage is done, mkay?”

Blue deflated. “Yeah…”

“Good. Ink?”

Said artist perked up. “Hm?”

“You’re the Protector. What do *you* want to do about Error?”

Wait, what?

“Error?”

All nine pairs of eyelights snapped to Classic in an instant. They’d mostly ignored him until then, and he really hadn’t realized he’d even spoken up. He shifted awkwardly in place.

“Who the fuck’re you?” Red growled.

Blue suddenly beamed, gladly taking the change of topic. He hopped over to Classic and grabbed his arm excitedly. “This is Classic Sans! We were patrolling AUs and ended up in his and he found us by accident and it turns out he already knew about the multiverse so we brought him with us!”

The darker skeleton narrowed his eyes. “So, what? They old fashioned or whatever? How’d’ya know he ain’t a bad Sans?”

Ink snorted loudly, dropping his pencil. “HA! *Bad Sans*, that’s hilarious!”

“What’s so fuckin’ funny?!”

Dream giggled into his hand. “No no, Red, you’ve got it all wrong.

This is *Classic* Sans. Like, the original Universe. He *is* Sans the Skeleton."

Classic was starting to think he was a bigger deal than anyone let on, and he didn't know how he felt about that.

There was a silence amongst them all, broken only when Red scoffed, face slightly flushed his namesake, and turned his head away grumbling. The purple skeleton rolled his eyelights then turned to offer Classic a smile. "Don't mind him. I'm sure by now you've gotten that he's a little hot-headed." He scooched forward a bit and held out his hand to the original. "I'm Lust, by the way. Pleasure to meet you, darling."

"Uh, yeah." He shook the offered hand and nodded. "Same."

Blue shook the arm he still had grasped in his hands. Classic practically vibrated with his energetic movements. "Since you're new, you should be properly introduced to the team! You know Ink, Dream and I, of course. The grumpy one is Red, from Underfell. I think you two'd get along!" Red barked an objection that went ignored by most. "The one beside him is Comet from Outertale." Said skeleton raised a hand in greeting. "The dark one floating around is Reaper! He's from Reapertale!"

"Sup, Classic," Reaper greeted, spinning around to float on his stomach and give a Cheshire grin. "I'd offer to shake your hand as well, but that'd be the *death* of you. Quite literally."

"Huh. Good to know."

"The one on the roof is Falcon or Birdy, from Birdtale!"

He raised a hand, fluttering his wings a bit. “Heya.”

“And the one besides Lust is Dance from Dancetale!” The hooded lookalike bobbed his head. “Usually Razz and King are here, too, but um… you’ll just have to meet them next time!”

“Right, looking forward to it. Nice to meet you all, but about that,” Classic turned a confused glance to Ink. “You guys said Error, right?”

That friendly grin fell a bit. “Yes? Why?”

“Like, black bones, dark trench coat, blue tear marks, somehow wears the three primary colors without looking like a kindergarten scribbly mess, Error?”

Dream sat up straight in his chair, looking at Classic worriedly. “Yes? Have you seen him?”

Ink suddenly looked *very* concerned. “Has he been to your universe?”

“Well, yeah, that’s why I-“

“*Shit.*” Ink threw his sketchbook down and stood up, walking directly to Classic. “When? How long has he known where the original universe is?”

Classic’s eye sockets widened at the sudden proximity. He took a step

back. “I- what? Why?”

“Why does it matter he knows where he is?” Falcon asked, his brows furrowed in concern.

“That’s… not good,” Reaper muttered to himself, looking uncharacteristically (from what Classic has gotten from his character so far) serious. “If the Destroyer destroys the OG Undertale…”

“The whole multiverse will die,” Dream finished for him, his hands shaking. “This… Ink…”

“How long, Classic?” Ink asked again, stern but still showing his nervousness.

Classic held up his hands. “Hold on, guys, let me finish.”

“Classic, this is extremely serious,” the Protector insisted, eyes pleading. “We can handle him taking down a few AUs here and there ‘cause we can bring them back. We *can’t* bring yours back.”

“Yeah, I’m getting that.” He put a hand on Ink’s shoulder. “Weren’t you just fighting for his innocence seconds ago, though?”

“I…” Ink sighed, turning away. “I want to believe he’s a good person. I’ve had moments with him that he… let’s his guard down, shows a bit of emotion that isn’t anger or insanity. But his mission is to destroy the entire Multiverse. He has two easy ways of doing that: getting here, in the Doodle Sphere, or finding the Original Universe.”

“Are you *sure* his mission is to destroy the Multiverse, though?”

This earned him, expectedly, a lot of confused and baffled looks.

“What the fuck- did you not hear *anything* we were just talking about?!” Red yelled.

“He’s the Destroyer,” Dance said matter-of-factly. “It’s literally his purpose.”

“Well, yeah, but— look,” Classic tilted his head and regarded all of them, “I’ve known Error for a long time. He’s how I know about the Multiverse, ‘cause he talks about it all the damn time. He’s not a bad guy at all.” He paused. “Er, well, not to us, at least.” They all stared at him, none daring to speak at that information. He was getting more nervous by the second. “I swear, guys. If he wanted to destroy my universe, he’s had a million and one chances to.”

A hand was placed on his. Classic turned to face shimmering blue eyes. “What… what do you mean?” Blue asked, his voice hopeful. “You know him well? Like, friends?”

He had to stop and think about that for a moment. Were they friends? He’d never really considered the idea, just kind of assumed Error was… a part of everything. But now that it was on his mind, “Yeah. Yeah, I’d say we were friends.”

“He’s probably using you, or some shit,” Red objected, but even he was looking less and less convinced by his own words.

Classic merely shook his head. “No, like I said, if he really wanted to,

he could have killed us all ages ago. He's visited countless times before. I've trusted him for a long time. If he really wanted to just destroy everything all together, he'd have done it by now. Error's not exactly the kind of guy to beat around the bush, y'know?"

"So you just… hang out?" Lust asked, looking kind of amazed at the idea.

"Yeah, he stops by to just hang out a lot of the time. Playing video games, watching anime with Alph and I, help Papyrus cook food that doesn't eat us back — heck, he's sparred with Undies a few times. Really gave her a run for her money." He chuckled a bit. That was always amusing, to watch Undyne get completely wrecked in a fight with an opponent that wasn't trying to actively dust her. No matter how many Resets he goes through, the look on her face (and his brother's, as well, when he realizes someone can *beat* Undyne) never gets old. "He's extremely helpful around the Underground, too. Brings kids candy, makes them little dolls and shit. Pretty sure he's gotten a couple babysitting gigs a few Resets. He never gets involved when Frisk's around, though. Usually just spies with me or something."

"What about genocide runs?" Reaper asked, looking extremely intrigued. The topic immediately dimmed the mood, but it was a valid question.

Classic stuck his hands firmly in his pockets, shuffling on his feet. "Uh, like I said, he doesn't get involved much when the human is there. Says he can't. But he does, um, follow me around while I follow the kid around and…" He looked away. "Well, he stays around while I'm dusting, usually. Not all the time. He can't be there twenty-four-seven, but when he is it's… nice."

It was. He's supposed to be the last monster around, besides the king and whoever Alphys saved. He's usually alone in that time — left to fall apart painfully on the cold floor either in the Hall or, if he has the strength to shortcut, in front of Grillby's. Then, Error showed up for a

few Resets. He stayed around the whole first genocide he was there for, hardly phased by the brutal acts he witnessed. Classic wasn't all that affected either, having seen it countless times, but it was definitely nicer to have someone at his side the whole way through.

He felt guilty about it at first. Why should he have comfort when everyone else had to suffer? Why did he deserve it, but his brother didn't? Why did he get to have someone there to cradle his head while he crumbled into a powder, red liquid dripping from his teeth and an agonizing slash across his chest? It didn't seem *fair*.

He'd failed to save all his friends from this endless torture for as long as he could remember. How could he deserve *anything?*

The next time it happened, he'd tried to push Error away. The glitching skeleton just looked annoyed and refused, sitting firmly beside the dying monster.

"I can't do this with the others," he'd said. *"I can show up whenever before the brat falls and frolic with you idiots all you want, but as soon as they're here, I'd change the story too much. But* you *always remember. You remember every reset, every happy ending, every death, and every save. You remember* me*. I can't interfere with the others, but in the end, that doesn't matter. They won't remember. You will. You suffer the most. So stop being a brainless numbskull and accept some kind of help. Idiot."*

Yeah. They were *definitely* friends.

"I knew it…"

He looked to his side, surprised to see Blueberry with bright blue tears streaming down his cheeks. An optimistic smile erupted on his face. "I *knew* it! I knew he was good! I knew he had some good in him! We

just don't see it all the time! He has his reasons! I know he does! He *has* to!" Excitedly, he turned to the rest of the shocked skeletons. "We just have to talk to him! I'm sure we can come to an agreement!"

"I…" Dream took a breath, whipping at his eye sockets a bit. He wasn't crying, but he looked close to it. He smiled hopefully at his friend. "I agree. But it shouldn't be all of us. I don't think he'd appreciate getting bombarded by all of the good Sanses."

"I can ask him next time he comes around," Classic suggested, shrugging. "He hasn't popped up in a while, so it'll likely be in the next few Resets."

"I don't know if that's a good idea," Dream said slowly, furrowing his brows in thought.

"What? Why not?"

"Well, I don't doubt that you have a good relationship with him, but…" The bright skeleton fumbled with his thoughts for a moment, twisting his hand in the air as if trying to grab the right words to say. "You're a very important skeleton, Classic. I… I know you see him as a good guy, but it might be best if you're not alone with him again until we can confirm that?"

A flare of annoyance sparked in his soul. "Seriously? I'm not made of glass or anything. He won't hurt me."

"Trust me, we know," Reaper nodded, crossing his arms. "Besides me, Ink, Error, and possibly Nightmare or Seraph, you're the strongest Sans in the multiverse."

Classic barely knew any of those people, even the ones standing in front of him. However, going off the shocked expressions some of the others displayed at that, he had a feeling they were important, powerful monsters.

(Nightmare, at least, was a familiar name. Error must have mentioned him. He might have to ask about it later.)

“But that’s exactly it,” Dream added. “Error *is* stronger. I’m just worried he’ll feel cornered if you start interrogating him and lash out.” He turned his yellow gaze to Ink. “I think Ink should handle this one.”

“Ink’s been *trying* to ‘handle this one’ for-fucking-ever,” Red growled, running a hand down his face. “I say we at least let the fucker *try*.”

Falcon sat up from his spot laid out on the roof, pushing his orange goggles off his eye sockets and onto his forehead. “What if they both talked to him? Sounds like they’re the ones he trusts the most, besides maybe Blue.”

Said skeleton shook his head sadly. “No, he’ll talk to me about a lot of things, but as soon as it gets personal or about the multiverse, he leaves.”

“Would Error talk to both of them at once, though?” Lust asked.

The winged monster shrugged. “Maybe. Seems like a good bet, I think. Classic and Error are buddies and Ink could be there to protect him if shit hit the fan.”

Dance shook his head, pulling his hood down. “He might also think Classic turned on him if he’s brought with a Star Sans to ask him questions.”

“I don’t think we should take away his one source of some kind of normalcy,” Blue agreed.

“Then it should definitely just be Ink,” Dream insisted. “He can say he met and talked with Classic a bit and wanted to give him a chance.”

“No.”

All skeletons in the area turned to Ink, who, surprisingly, was the one to speak up. He had his gaze firmly set on the original Sans. “It should be Classic.”

“What? Ink, he-“

“Is a friend to Error.” Ink looked at his companion. “Dream, if they’re as close as Classic is saying, I really think it would be best for them to talk it out first. We let him come to Classic, and he can ask anything he wants without being bias of Error as the Destroyer. He’d be the most comfortable with him, and it would be on his terms. Let’s be honest here; he’d think it was an interrogation if this came from literally anyone else.”

“I *really* don’t think that’s a good idea, Ink…”

“Wait, how about this.” Lust reached into his vest and pulled something out. It was a small glass vial of pink ink. “We give Classic a way to contact Ink. When Error shows up, he can spill it so we know

to at least keep an eye on the Original Universe. It would give Classic a chance to talk to him, but also allow us to come to the rescue if something went wrong."

Classic eyed the vial skeptically, still not liking how protective these complete strangers were. They all (except Red) acted similar to how his brother did; like he was someone to be coddled. Really, Error was the first alternate he'd met, and he'd been hanging out with the guy for ages. He knew what he was doing. "Do I not get a say in this at all?"

"Of course you do!" Blue said happily.

"Everyone gets to say their shit in this group," Red shrugged. "It's just a matter of whether or not it's overruled by Ink 'er somethin'."

Said skeleton ignored that comment and plucked the pink vial from Lust's hand. He smiled at the Underlust monster. "Do you mind if he takes this one for now? I can get you another one before you leave."

Lust waved his hand. "Yeah, of course. It's why I was offering it."

Nodding, the Protector went back to Classic and held out the vial. "I was going to give you one eventually anyway. Any Sans I meet gets a vial in case they need to contact me for emergencies. Just spill the ink somehow and I'll be alerted."

Classic reluctantly took the pink ink, eying it suspiciously. "If it's for emergencies, how do I know you won't come running? Isn't the idea that you're just alerted, so you don't pop up and fuck everything up?"

Ink pouted. “I wouldn’t fuck anything up.”

Classic gave him a deadpanned stare. “You fell out of a tree besides my station by the Ruins right after the human walked by. That’s literally how I met you thirty minutes ago. You then proceeded to panic because I wasn’t supposed to know about AUs apparently. How, pray tell, is that not *fucking something up?”*

Red snorted a laugh while Ink’s pout deepened. “Pff, I like this dude,” he snickered.

“Glad I tickled your funny bone.”

The snickering just got louder.

“That’s not fair, though!” Ink interrupted, crossing his arms. “You already knew about the AUs! So I technically didn’t ruin anything!”

Classic rolled his eyes. “Answer the damn question.”

Huffing fitfully, Ink pointed at the pink ink and said, “Spill it for Error, smash it if there’s an emergency.”

“You’ll feel the difference?”

“Yeah. I get a more prickly feeling if you smash it. Probably because of the glass.”

“Maybe write that on your scarf, Ink,” Reaper suggested, carefully handing him a pen to do so. “You’ll probably forget otherwise.”

“Oh! Yeah, thank you!” The Protector grabbed the tool and unraveled his brown scarf a bit. As he brought the tip to the fabric, he paused, then sheepishly glanced at Reaper. “What was I writing down again?”

“Stars…” Comet dragged a hand down his face with an anxious and amused smile while the robed skeleton helped Ink write what he needed.

Sarcastically clapping his hands, Red gestured to the artist and announced, “Our Protector, everyone.”

Falcon snickered. “Everyday, I am amazed that the multiverse is still standing.”

“I’m starting to question it myself.” Classic pocketed the vial and leaned back on his heals. “Can I leave now? I don’t want the kid to notice I’m gone or anything.”

“You understand what you’re supposed to do?” Dream asked, still looking uneasy but smiling anyway.

“Yeah yeah. Spill the ink when Error shows up, ask him about his motives, report back to you.”

“Or send him my way, if you can,” Ink said, smiling. “If he really listens to you, it’d be great to settle things as soon as possible!”

“Do I have a way of contacting you that isn’t as messy and single-use-only? Like texting or something?”

“Oh! Yeah, here, gimme your phone.” Curious, Classic handed over his simple flip phone. The artist typed away at it for a moment, fingers glowing with a rainbow aura. The original skeleton watched, mildly fascinated. When the device was handed back, he noticed the keyboard had a similar rainbow backlighting. “I put all of our contacts in! It’ll work cross-universe now, so you can shoot us all a text whenever.”

“Cool. Thanks.” He put it away again, deciding to flip through that later when he didn’t have to worry about what run the human was doing right now. “How do I get home?”

“I’ll take ya!” Ink gladly led him away from the group, letting them all say their goodbyes before opening an inky portal back to the Original Undertale. Classic eyed it momentarily but hopped in anyway. When he opened his eye sockets again, he found himself back at his station, standing behind that very convenient lamp. Surprisingly, Ink was there too.

“Uh, I thought you were staying?” he asked in confusion.

The artist stared contemplatively at Classic for a moment, his eyelights flickering through shapes and colors in a way that showed he was thinking way too hard about something. After an awkward silence, he strapped his brush onto his back, took a quick drink of his orange vial of paint, and returned his gaze to Classic.

“You said he comforts you during Gen runs, right?” Puzzled, Classic nodded. “Does he… let you touch him, then? At all?”

A bit of understanding washed through Classic's body. "Yes and no. I can't touch him, but he'll touch me, if that makes sense? He glitches if I initiate anything, but he'll pat others on the shoulder or something every so often. Nothing super prolonged, but it is something he's… working on, I guess?"

Ink hummed, nodding. "That makes sense. Just wanted to know."

"Why?"

The artist smiled a bit. "He's only let me touch him once, when I found him in Outertale. I'd bumped into him plenty of times before, and they all set off his haphephobia pretty badly— crashing, he calls it. I wanted to know why he'd let me then. It wasn't a hug or anything," he pouted at that, and Classic had to hold off a laugh at the image of Error *hugging* someone, "just bumping knees. He just got a little shy and said it didn't bother him that much." Ink beamed at that. "But that's just Error-speak for '*you* don't bother me that much!' I just wanted to be really really sure that he trusted you as much as you think he did."

Oh. That was surprisingly nice. Classic was almost expecting some kind of jealous freak out, but if he had any kind of doubts with how genuine Ink was before, most of them were gone now.

Most. There was still the chance he was lying or manipulative. He didn't know the Protector, after all. Everything he had to go off of was the little stories Error brought up, all of which painted him as a forgetful, childish fool. He kind of figured those tales were a bit exaggerated, but actually meeting Ink made him feel a little better.

"Anyway!" Ink pulled out his brush again and twirled it above his head needlessly, all while grinning widely. "I gotta head back before they all kill each other! Good luck, Class! It was cool meeting you!

Well, cool *officially* meeting you. You meeting me? Whatever. When this is all over, we should hang out! Peace!" Without waiting for him to reply at all, the skeleton melted into a pile of his namesake, leaving him alone in the snow. Classic stared at the leftover black puddle as it cooled in the snow, feeling completely weirded out.

He turned towards the pathway, eying the little footsteps Frisk left behind, and sighed to himself.

That was a lot of information he just had thrown in his face.

This was *definitely* going to take some getting used to.

-:(o):-

It had been three Resets since his weird meeting with his alternates, and Error still hadn't shown up in his universe. All three had been neutral runs so far, likely a sign that Frisk and Chara were having an internal fight again. He was alright with that. He just went about the usual motions and helped the kid out when he could.

He may not like the human all that much, but he definitely needed Frisk if they were to ever get out of the Underground for real one day.

In the dull moments of watching the same events over and over, Classic found himself texting the other Sanses quite often. As much as he doubted it before, he and Red got along swimmingly. He'd never met someone that enjoyed puns *and* dark humor all in one, so he spent most of his time exchanging jokes with the Fell monster.

Lust, Comet, and Ink enjoyed sending him photos from their different

universes. Comet constantly had new star pictures that captivated Classic for *hours*, and he enjoyed telling him about every one of them. Ink sent all of them updates on new or old AUs and even occasional drawings he made, which was cool. He was extremely talented, which he guessed was useful for his job. Lust mainly sent silly selfies with captions that were prime meme material.

Blue had texted him almost every day with good wishes and the occasional story or two of his experiences with the AUs. He was Classic's main source of information at this point, mainly because the smaller skeleton just really liked to talk/text. Apparently, Error kidnapping him was his introduction to the Multiverse, and he had quite a few interesting tales about his adventures since then.

Reaper was great with blackmail. He had dirt on almost every Sans ever, and gladly found joy in sharing embarrassing stories and videos of past pranks for each and every one.

The others hardly talked much at all, and he respected that as well.

The most interesting thing he learned from each of them was about the AUs themselves. It was amazing how many different worlds were out there with essentially the same people, just put in different situations. Underfell and Swapfell sounded horrible, but he got the feeling Red agreed with that sentiment. He wasn't sure about Razz. The guy only ever spoke in their groupchat, so he hadn't really gotten a good grasp on him yet. Underswap and Dancetale just seemed like they would be hilarious to see one day, and Outertale was definitely on his list of "AUs I Will Eventually Weasel My Way Into."

All in all, his days got a lot more interesting. Classic was constantly getting asked who he was texting so often, or if he suddenly got a girlfriend because he was smiling at his phone way too much. He really didn't care and just brushed off their prying questions. It was a once in a lifetime opportunity to get to meet alternate versions of yourself (though, honestly, they seemed less and less like versions of

himself the more he learned about their unique personalities) and he wasn't going to let some slightly embarrassing prodding get in the way of that.

Currently, he was sending pictures back and forth with Lust while drinking ketchup at Grillby's, snickering at each one that came through. He'd gotten an upgrade from Alphys the day after he got back from the meeting. Usually, he didn't care much about his phone at all. He never used it for anything but texts and calls, so he didn't see a point in pictures, games, the Undernet, or anything of the like. It was pointless. Then, Ink tried to add him to a group chat and his phone just continued to send each of their texts in different contact messages. It was way too confusing, so he had his reptile friend fix the issue for him. He was now able to do a lot more with it (including a jetpack, for some reason?), and she updated the phone directly, so it kept its strange interdimensional power.

She questioned him heavily on the weird rainbow glow and why she couldn't identify what kind of power source it ran off of, but he talked circles around all of her questions easily. It wouldn't matter anyways. She'd forget about it after the next Reset.

Thankfully, said interdimensional power let it withhold that upgrade in each Reset. That was oddly convenient, but he figured it was best not to question the power of a literal artist god.

Lust sent him a picture of their version of the Annoying Dog somehow sleeping on their ceiling, as they do, with the caption "What's up, dog?" and he snorted a bit. Grillby gave him a glance from his spot drying a cup. Classic just winked at him and went back to his messages. He found there was a new one from Blue, so he clicked out of Lust's to check.

Of course, he was asking if Error had shown up at all.

Classic sighed, setting his ketchup bottle down to reply with a negative. He'd honestly expected the other to show up sooner than this. He usually came around every few Resets, but he must be busy. According to Ink, because Classic wasn't allowed to come to any meetings while he was waiting, Error had been a lot more active. He'd apparently taken down five more AUs since Classic was brought into this, two of which they couldn't resurrect.

He was honestly still trying to wrap his head around that. Yeah, Error was a bit of a mean guy sometimes, but he never took him for a… well, "murderer" didn't really seem like the right term. He was angsty, but he was also so kind in Undertale.

Though, it had always unnerved him that his stats and LV were all glitched and impossible to Judge…

Classic *knew* there was more to this. He just had to figure it out.

He was about to return to Lust's texts when someone spoke up behind him.

"Jeez, you look like your fuckin' phone kicked a puppy or some shit. The fuck's up with you?"

Startled, Classic spun around on his bar stool. Error raised an eyebrow quizzically, his arms crossed across his chest. A couple monsters in the bar were staring at the newcomer in surprise, as they always did. Technically, this was a new monster to them. "Well?"

"Uh." The small feeling of that pink vial weighed heavily in his pocket. When he didn't immediately answer, Error's eye sockets narrowed.

“Something’s fuckin’ wrong, so spill. What’s go you so stunned?” He paused, expression softening a bit. “Was there a really bad G. Run while I wasn’t here? I didn’t mean to be gone so long. Just got caught up in a few things.”

Classic shook his head, immediately berating himself for his sudden hesitance.

This was his *friend*. The others could suck it up.

“No, sorry, you just *rattled* me.” Error scoffed at the poor joke. “Give me a second. I was talking with Alph.”

The other skeleton shrugged. “Whatever. Nice phone, by the way.”

Classic smiled a bit. “Yeah, figured it was time for an upgrade.” He texted Lust a quick goodbye, making up an excuse about Papyrus coming around, and returned the phone to his pocket, purposefully ignoring the vial of ink. “Mkay, let’s head to my place. You seem like you need to rest your bones.” Taking a final swig from his ketchup bottle, he placed it back down and winked at the bartender. “Put it on my tab, Grillbz.”

The fire elemental rolled his eyes, already moving to pick up the discarded bottle.

The two skeletons quietly made their way out of the bar, waving at the others as they all said their goodbyes. While they walked across Snowden, Classic eyed the darker skeleton from the corner of his eye socket. Error was walking more slumped that usual, his eyes half lidded and darker than usual. When he said the Destroyer looked like

he needed to rest, he really wasn't kidding. The guy looked like he hadn't gotten much sleep at all.

Error caught his gaze with his own, lazily lifting a brow in question. Classic didn't shy away from being caught staring. He sent the other a slightly worried glance before turning back to where their house was just down the path.

Neither said anything until they were inside.

Classic kicked off his slippers and gestured to the couch. "It's the day before Frisk shows up. Paps is out training, so we have the place to ourselves."

"Cool." Error flopped onto the couch, throwing his feet carelessly onto the cushions and claiming the entire chair. "Don't think I could handle his energy right now."

"Yeah, you look like shit."

"Wow, thanks."

"Yeah, no problem." He smirked at the glare Error threw him. "You want anything to eat or did you bring your own shit?"

Error scoffed. "What kind of a question is that?" From his long coat, the skeleton pulled out a bar of chocolate. It was the spicy brand Classic didn't much care for, but he found it all the more interesting knowing the glitching monster stole it from Red's own stash.

“A very dumb question, but I thought I’d offer anyway. Bro’d kill me if I didn’t show some hospitality.” When he made his way over to the other side of the couch, Error pulled his legs up enough to let him sit down without them touching. The two sat in a comfortable silence for a bit while Error ate the chocolate bar. It was nice to be able to relax on the couch for a while, even if he was a little tense. Classic’s mind was a muddled mess trying to think of how to breach the topic without seeming accusatory, but he also didn’t want to beat around the bush.

Being blunt always worked best when it came to the dark skeleton.

“So, why are you so nervous today?” Error spoke up, finishing his snack in a final swift bite. At least he hadn’t eaten the wrapper again.

“Nervous?” he asked.

Error sent him a look that clearly said ‘don’t play dumb with me.’ “Yeah. You’re tense as shit, barely told a joke the whole time, obviously brought me to your home for privacy, and you haven’t even offered to turn the TV on, so I’m assumin’ you need to talk. So, what’s wrong?”

Well, that was fair. Still, he wouldn’t exactly say he was *nervous*; more, he was a bit cautious.

The last thing he wanted was to fuck this up. Y’know, Ink style.

“Yeah,” he nodded, laying back casually and easing his bones a bit. “Yeah, I do need to talk with ya.”

“Spit it out then, asshole.”

Sighing, Classic pulled his feet onto the couch and turned to face the other skeleton. “You’re the Destroyer, right?”

Those mismatched gold and blue eyelights stared into his own white spheres. The glitch didn’t outwardly respond otherwise, but Classic knew him well enough. A wave of boxy glitches and ERRORs rippled along his arms like visible shivers.

“Who the fuck told you that,” he grumbled lowly.

Classic shrugged. “Ink fell out of a tree, Star Sanses found out I knew about the Multiverse, dragged me to a rather pitiful meeting, and they talked about you. I just- hey, what the hell’re you doing?”

Error had stood up from his seat, tossing the empty wrapper on the ground and opening a portal right there in the living room. “Leaving,” he barked.

The white skeleton was immediately on his feet, hands held out but hesitating to do anything. He really didn’t want to make the other crash by grabbing him, but he also couldn’t just let him leave! “Why are you-?”

“Because you’re gonna fucking tell me to anyways, so I’d rather leave on my own *fucking* accord than you’re orders!” Fists balled at his sides, Error stomped his way towards the fizzy portal showcasing a plain white space decorated with a web of blue strings in the air. His ‘home’, a sight Classic had only seen through these portals before, despite asking to see it up close. Error always got weird about it. A little annoyed, Classic stepped through a shortcut and popped up in front of the darker skeleton. Error startled, looking pissed. “Move,

Sans!”

“No,” he hissed. “I wasn’t going to fucking tell you to leave, asshole.”

“Then you’re fucking stalling for the *good* Sanses to get here!”

“No, I’m not! I just wanted to talk to you-!”

“Like hell! You probably called them the damn moment I got here!”

Classic glared into the other’s eye sockets, stepping as close as he could to the taller skeleton’s face without making contact. “Yes! I was *supposed* to fucking notify them when you got here! Fuck, I was texting Lust when you showed up. But y’know what?” He held up his phone. “I told him I had to go ‘cause *Paps* called me. Check the messages if you need to, prick.” Shoving the device into the other’s hands, he then reached into his pocket and pulled out the untouched vial of pink ink. “And I was *supposed to* spill this shit too, so *Ink* would know, but obviously, I fucking *didn’t*, because I wanted to talk to you as a stars damned *friend* and not a fucking *interrogator*. So, we are going to sit the fuck back down on that couch and talk, or I’m spilling this shit across my damn carpet — and we both know Paps won’t be happy about that either!”

The two glared heatedly at each other in silence, both daring the other to make the first move. The only sound in the room came from the TV-like fizzing the portal behind Classic made and the slight rustling that was likely the Annoying Dog getting into stuff in the kitchen. Neither paid it any mind.

Finally, the portal closed with a fizzled *pop*. Dropping Classic’s phone unceremoniously to the floor, Error turned back around and sat on the couch again, his arms crossed, and face still pinched angrily. He

snarled up at the other skeleton.

"Fine. You wanna talk? Let's fucking talk."

An uneasy relief swept through Classic's bones. With a heavy sigh, he firmly set the vial on the coffee table and sat down on the other side of the couch again. "You're the Destroyer," he stated, glancing at the monster from the corner of his eyes. "In your words, not theirs, what does that mean?"

He scoffed. "I destroy universes. What the fuck did you think it meant?"

"That's not your words."

"You want my words? I'm a killer— a crazy, sadistic piece of shit. I kill babies for *funsies*, then tear their damn world apart piece by piece. Happy?"

Classic crossed his arms and stared the other monster down. "That's *definitely* not your own words."

Error glowered at him harshly, grinding his yellow teeth. "I'm a *fucking murderer.* What else do you fucking need?"

Rolling his eyelights, Classic dismissively said, "Yeah, yeah, welcome to the damn club. But that's not your *job.*"

"Club? *Club?!"*

“Error, I’ve killed the same damn kid a million times over, not to mention the many monsters I’ve Judged and killed, or the two brats I killed before Frisk. Yeah, welcome to the fucking club.”

“That’s hardly a damn *sliver* of the body count I got, asshole,” Error snarled, jabbing a thumb to his own chest. “I practically cause mass genocides in and of itself. That’s *hardly* the same as killing a couple’a bad guys here and there.”

“You’re right. It’s not the same.” Classic leaned back in his seat, easing his annoyed expression a bit. “But it’s similar enough that I can know killing doesn’t always make you *bad.* I’m the Judge, Error. It’s literally *my* job to look at someone and find out whether they had good intentions or not. And honestly, knowing you, I think you *do.* So, tell me, in *your own definition*, what’s *your* job?”

Error, for once, looked shocked rather than pissy. He watched the original Sans for a good few moments, likely looking for any sign of betrayal or deceit. Classic let him think it through, patiently waiting for a response.

Finally, after a solid couple minutes, he muttered, “I keep the balance.”

Classic furrowed his boney brows. “Balance?”

The other shifted a bit uncomfortably but relaxed into the familiar comfort of the couch. With a sigh, he opened his mouth to explain.

As he said he would, Classic heard him out as a friend and made his final Judgement afterwards.

-:(o):-

“What the *fuck*, Classic?” Ink muttered to himself, looking at his phone in partial amusement, but mostly exasperation.

he’s good. talk to him yourself. sent him your way

… make sure he actually comes your way.

Really, he didn’t know why he was surprised the other didn’t use the signal. Sanses were notoriously stubborn, and Classic was literally the root of them all.

Still, Dream wouldn’t be very happy with this.

But he couldn’t find it in himself to care. Error was willing to talk, and Classic was giving him the all clear. That was a hundred times better than anything Ink had ever gotten in his years of fighting with the Destroyer, so he certainly wouldn’t complain.

Where???

outertale

cuz neither of you have access to each other’s homes, apparently.

You can’t blame us!! :’(We couldn’t trust each other!

no, you have a fairly valid reason.

he just didn't want you to, and i quote, "annoy the ever living shit outta me on my days off, the damn squid."

…That's also a fairly valid reason.

lol

now go talk

"Right!" Ink grinned, standing up from his spot on his studio floor. A bunch of sketchbook and watercolor paper were strewn around him, most half-finished doodles he started then forgot about. Carefully avoiding the pens, pencils, and brushes that were scattered in his way, Ink hurried to the door. He threw on his sash for his vials of paint over the top of the messy purple hoodie he had on, completely bypassing his under armor and typical self-designated Protector outfit in favor of time.

He spent a few embarrassing minutes searching for Broomie, then opened a portal to Outertale in nothing but his sweatshirt, shorts, and sash. He hadn't even noticed the lack of shoes until his feet touched space dirt.

Oh well. Ink hardly cared at the moment. The particles immediately wedged in the spaces between small bones as he walked, but he refused to go back.

Eyelights scanning the area, Ink took a few sips from his paints and wondered the land. Outertale really was one of his best works—surprising, really, because it wasn't all that difficult to make. The Creator already had the basic designs for the characters and story, so all he really needed to do was make them and fill in the background with whatever he wanted. Stars and galaxies weren't all that hard to

do, at least for him. Especially considering the world was mostly just empty space. He just needed basic understanding of colors and how to mix them strategically in the sky, and boom! A beautiful space view everyone could enjoy. He even added a few planets here and there to spice it up.

It really was a popular Universe for visits. Everyone loved space! The Creators seemed happy about it as well.

Well, as far as he could tell, through their weird, nonverbal connection.

Honestly, Ink didn't know who or what the Creators even were. He wasn't even sure if there were more than one. He thinks there are, but who knows? He just gets images and feelings, then turns those into AUs.

But that's off topic. The constant question of his sort-of boss or bosses was easily forgotten in his sketchy memory as the excitable skeleton turned his gaze from the colorful sky back to why he was there.

It didn't take long to find the Destroyer. Honestly, Ink was a little surprised. He thought for sure the glitch would have left, or not even shown up to begin with.

From his huddled form, it looked like leaving was still very much an option.

Trying to hold back his giddiness, Ink hurriedly made his way over to the other skeleton. A grin forced it's way on his face when he got closer, seeing the other admiring the stars absentmindedly, despite his obvious nerves.

“Error!” he greeted enthusiastically. The other jumped, nearly falling from his perch by a small cliffside. Those red eye sockets glared back at him.

“Don’t fucking sneak up on me, asshole!”

“Oops. Sorry!” Ink plopped down beside the Destroyer, leaving a notable gap between them as he pulled his legs into a crossed position. “I’m just excited! We don’t get to talk one on one like this very often!”

The other stared at him incredulously. “What the fuck are you wearing? You look like you just came from a fucking kindergarten class.”

“No I don’t! I wear this while I’m drawing, if you must know. It’s soft and comfortable. I didn’t figure we’d be fighting or anything, so I just grabbed the essentials!”

“You look ridiculous.”

“I look adorable, thank you very much! Now, no stalling! We’re here to talk about you, not my outfit!”

The darker skeleton rolled his eyelights, shifting uncomfortably. “This is fuckin’ stupid…”

“It’s not stupid! I’ve been trying to talk to you about this for a long time, but you always avoided us. I’m glad we get to sit down and do it

now!" The artist smiled confidently.

Error glared half-heartedly, pulling his knees to his chest. "Yeah. Because you all decided to sic fuckin' Classic on me," he grumbled.

"I wouldn't say we *sicced* him on you! Sicced? Suc? You know what I mean!"

"Ugh. I can already tell this is gonna be a long conversation…"

Ink sulked. "That's not very nice…"

Growling, Error tightened his grip on his knees. "Look, I'm only here 'cause Sa- fuck, *Classic* said you wanted to know what-the-fuck-ever about my *Destroyer Job*; spouted some bullshit about you *caring* and trying to prove I'm *good*."

Ink blinked a few times, his eyelights flickering in his confusion. "Bullshit? Of course I care."

The glitch scoffed and stared very pointedly at the stars. "Whatever. Ask what you want. I already told Classic everything, so it's not like you wouldn't find out anyway."

"No no." The Protector shifted to face the other properly. "That can wait. I thought we got along last time. I mean, I think we did?" He paused, squinting in thought. "I… can't remember our full conversation… but I know it was a good one! And that we didn't fight! … Much! Um, right?" He slouched and rubbed the back of his neck. "I'm not very good at this…"

Error snorted. “I can see that,” he mumbled into his sleeves.

“But! That doesn’t erase the fact that I *do* care! Quite a bit! A surprising bit, honestly.”

“Yeah. You care about the AUs getting destroyed.”

“Well, yes, that is part of it, but that’s not what I meant.” Ink gestured to his sash. “I usually don’t feel anything without using my paints. Like, I’ll get a burst of happiness from yellow that can mellow out to other emotions depending on what’s happening and how I should feel about that, but with you…” He shrugged. “Sometimes I feel like I get that burst of emotion when you’re around. Kinda the same as Dream, Blue, and Reaper, but more prominent. If that makes sense?”

Error was watching him from the corner of his eye sockets, his brows furrowed a bit but not in frustration or anger. Ink was having a hard time reading him, to be honest. “A bit?” the skeleton said lowly. “I don’t see why this matters.”

“You make me happy!” the artist said, as if it was the most obvious thing in the world. He dismissed the faint yellow glow on Error’s face. “I don’t *feel* like that unless I’m around someone I care about! So, I *do* care about you, and I trust you have valid reasons for doing what you do. I just want to understand them so we can maybe work something out?” He pouted a bit, slumping forward. “I don’t like having to fight every time we see each other. I think it would be much easier to talk about it and go from there.”

There was a brief silence between the two before Error muttered, “I can’t stop destroying AUs, if that’s what you’re thinking.”

Rather than getting upset, like he expected, Ink perked up. “You said *can’t!* That means there *is* a reason!” He beamed, his eyelights shifting to a yellow sun and purple star. “Like I said, we can work things out! Er, later. First tell me how you- no, wait, start with the why. *Why* do you destroy?”

Error huffed in what Ink *thinks* was laughter, but he couldn’t be too certain from the angle he was at. He was just going to pretend it was laughter! Those yellow eyelights framed in red turned away from him again. “Balance,” the darker skeleton finally said. “I keep the balance of the Multiverse.”

Ink tilted his head, confused. “Balance?”

The other nodded minutely. “Too many AUs, and not only will they collide from overcrowding, but the Classic Universe would start to unravel, eventually taking out the entire multiverse anyway.”

Ink stared at him in mild surprise. “I… didn’t know that,” he muttered, uncharacteristically silent. You’d think that was something the Protector and creator should know. Briefly, Ink wondered if it was something he *was* told, but forgot about. It wouldn’t be the first time he dropped the ball on something important, especially if it was told to him at the very beginning, before he started writing notes on his scarf.

Ink suddenly wished he grabbed his scarf before leaving. He wanted to double check if anything about the balance was written anywhere.

Jeez, as if Red and the others needed *more* reasons to tease him about being a terrible Protector…

“Yeah. No one really does.” Error shrugged, not paying attention to

Ink's inner turmoil. "I didn't until I first started checking on the Original Undertale."

"Why did you, by the way?"

He looked at the artist. "Why did I what?"

Ink shifted to his knees, furrowing his brows. "Check on the Original. I thought you wanted to destroy the multiverse, so…"

Error snorted. "What? No. Why the fuck would I do that?"

"Wait, really?!"

"No, you fuckin' idiot!" He paused, then looked away, his expression almost ashamed. "I mean, not anymore. When I first was… made, all I could think of was destroying timelines so no one would have to… suffer. In the constant Resets, I mean. I didn't realize it was entirely different Universes until I actually looked into one. Then I found out about the multiverse as a whole, and there was you, and I…" He shook his head, glaring at the ground to focus again. "I wanted to destroy everything except the Original."

"What? Why?"

"I'm fucking getting to that!" Error glared, but Ink was happy to note that he looked a lot more relaxed than before. The glitch had released his death grip on his legs, letting them hang over the cliff's edge again. "Everything else was a glitch, an abomination — none of them should have existed, and it was just more suffering for more people, especially since there was shit like Dusttale and Horrortale.

Undertale's Original had a happy ending. They couldn't fuckin' stay there, 'cause of a manipulative demon child, but it was there. I thought I'd end everything else, and then focus on helping Classic get his good ending permanently."

That was… a strange reasoning, but a far kinder one than any of them had assumed.

Ink wondered what AU Error had to have come from to have these kinds of morals but figured now wasn't a good time to ask. He may be shit at reading a room, but he could at the very least tell Error wasn't exactly comfortable talking as it is.

Damn, he should have brought his scarf. He really didn't want to write reminders on his good hoodie.

Shuffling forward, Ink looked at the starry sky with a concentrated gaze, brushing aside his more personal questions for an inquiry more on topic. "But a lot of AUs have happy endings like that. Underswap or Storyshift are the exact same story, just different roles. What's wrong with those?"

"Yeah, I realized that later," Error mumbled, his face once again flushing a little.

The artist stared at him for a moment before it clicked. A grin snapped onto his face, all previous negativity replaced with amusement. "You changed your mind because of Blueberry!"

"Shut up!"

"That's not a denial! You found someone besides Classic that you

thought deserved a happy ending! Admit it!"

The Destroyer growled, crossing his arms and refusing to meet the other's eyes. "Stars, you're infuriating!" he hissed, voice glitching more than usual. Ink merely laughed in response, nearly falling over in his mirth.

"So, you met *Blue*," he teased, dodging a rock that was tossed his way, "and decided you'd only destroy a few to keep the balance!"

"No."

Ink blinked, sitting up and still stifling his giggles. "No?"

Error ducked his face halfway into his blue scarf, hiding his glowing face and the blue marks below his eyes. "I met Blue and decided to stop destroying Universes all together." At Ink's surprised look, he sighed, squeezing his eye sockets closed. "I stopped destroying shit and started actually looking into what I had been destroying. That's when I found Candytale, or Littletale. That's when I started coming here regularly. It's quiet and peaceful here… and I found I actually liked it. I found I liked a lot of the universes, honestly. They were just… more interesting than my Anti-Void."

"Well, a lot of things are more interesting than the Anti-Void," Ink commented. Error tossed a glare his way but didn't argue. Really, from what Ink had seen through Error's portals, and Blue's descriptions, the Anti-Void kind of gave him the chills.

Too much white space. He much preferred color.

“I started visiting the OG Undertale then.” The glitch continued, shrugging halfheartedly. “Figured I could, I dunno, help out ‘er somethin’. Maybe figure out a way to stop Chara. That lead to actually interacting a little on the side, more or less on accident. I didn’t plan on befriending anyone, but figured it was the one place that wasn’t supposed to know about us, so they wouldn’t know I was, y’know, the Ex-Destroyer of Worlds, or whatever.”

That was a bit of a half-assed reason. Ink figured there was more to his choice in the Classic Undertale than he was letting on. Once again, though, he pushed the thought to the side.

“But you ended up making friends with him anyway!”

Error hmphed, muttering, “Not my friend,” in the most unconvincing tone Ink had ever heard. It just made the artist snicker a bit.

“So, why’d you go back to destroying then?” he probed, tilting his skull to the side.

“Spent a lotta time in the Classic ‘verse,” Error mumbled, eyes flickering up to watch a comet streak across the sky. A bit of that embarrassed tension relaxed from his shoulders. “I started to notice the code was corrupting a few Resets later. Not enough to effect much, but enough to cause concern. I looked into it, found some code was essentially being added into Undertale, tracked that down to a different universe entirely, and saw it colliding with another one. It’s… not a pretty sight.” The Destroyer’s social battery must have been wearing down. His descriptions were getting quicker and more vague, but Ink could get the general idea. “*That’s* when I realized too many Universes would hurt the Multiverse. So I started destroying forgotten ones, dead Universes. Got rid of a bunch just left empty on the side.”

“Then why’d you destroy Storyshift and Swapfell earlier?” Ink asked. “And Underlust a whole bunch. Those aren’t dead universes at all.”

Those yellow eyelights flickered to meet his blue and green ones. “Sometimes, it takes a long time to find dead or forgotten AUs, Ink. There are millions of AUs, and I have to sift through them all essentially one by one. I don’t always have that time, so I have to get rid of some that I have previous access to until I can get to others. It’s better to take out the popular ones, because I know you can bring them back later.” He looked away again. “After our last talk, you practically went on a creating spree. I had to take out a few good ones so I would have time to look around.”

Ink blinked, eyelights shifting rapidly at the intake of information. He had made quite a few AUs after their last conversation, now that he thought about it. He was genuinely happy to have seemingly gotten through to the Destroyer, he’d felt a bit more energetic and motivated. The AUs weren’t always thought up by a Creator, after all. The Protector liked to make them as well, though not nearly as frequently.

He had no idea making so many at once would have been the reason for Error’s sudden destructive moment.

The artist hummed, turning away to stare at the floor. Almost exaggeratedly, he rubbed his chin in thought.

How could they keep the balance, continue creating and destroying when needed, without killing the important AUs? And, if at all possible, how could he make Error’s job easier? The dark skeleton looked tired…

After a moment of contemplative silence, Ink brightened immediately and hopped to his feet. “I got it!” Error jumped at the sudden movement, falling over and glaring up at the Protector.

“What the hell, squid!” he hissed.

Ink completely ignored him, reaching for his Broomie with a wide grin. “C’mon! I have an idea!” He swiped a puddle of black ink across the floor, turning back to the glitch excitedly.

Error looked between him and the puddle suspiciously. “What?”

“Come with me!”

“Where?”

“My place!” He gestured to the puddle insistently. “C’mon, it’ll be easier to just show you!”

“Wait, your-?!”

Ink didn’t wait for him to finish. He hopped into the puddle, letting the ink consume his body and bring him right back to his living room. With a happy hum, he made his way to the front door, leaving it open. Looking up at the wide, warm yellow sky, Ink hummed in thought.

Behind him, he heard the telltale splash of his portal, and a disgusted cry. He sent an amused glance over his shoulder as Error shook the excess liquid from his arms and followed him out of the house.

“Welcome to the Doodle Sphere!” Ink announced, throwing Broomie over his shoulders. Error looked around in mild fascination.

“Holy shit,” he muttered, then furrowed his brows. “This seems… exceedingly extra.” He paused, then added, “Guess that’s right up your alley.”

“I’m taking that as a complement!” With a smile, Ink once again used his brush to hop from floating island to island, grabbing papers from the sky as he went. He glanced through the ones nearby quickly, standing on his large brush to grab any too high up. He couldn’t look through all of them right now, but he knew where most of the basics were. Error watched from the floor in confusion until Ink popped back up behind the dark skeleton, startling him a second time.

“Okay!” Ink said excitedly, ignoring the glower sent his way. “I’ll have to go through more, since I know for certain I forgot some, but!” He held out the papers, letting them float into the air around him. Each one had a different AU design on them. Some were landscapes of important areas, and others concept drawings of the characters. The longer Error looked at them, he realized each paper was actually flickering through drawings as well, fully showcasing the AUs’ key aspects.

“What are these?” he asked, giving Ink a weird look.

The artist just smiled and held one out to him. The paper showed a very clear drawing of Blue with a few expressive sketches beside it and some notes about his personality in the open spaces. As he grabbed it, the image shifted to a similar one of Underswap’s Papyrus. “These are the AUs!” Ink said happily, as if that was the most normal thing to show the Destroyer of AUs.

Error immediately let go of the Underswap paper, looking at Ink like he was crazy. Before he could protest, Ink just laughed. “Don’t worry! It’s fine.” He grabbed the paper back anyway and gestured to the ones around him. Underfell, Storyshift, Candytale, Aftertale, Horrortale,

even Outertale, plus about a dozen more, were all gravitating around the beaming Protector. “I’ll have all the ones we shouldn’t touch gathered together on…” He paused, glancing around his home. Humming, the artist shrugged. “I’ll probably make a new island around here for them all. So those will be undestroyable! Yeah?”

Still trying to catch up with what was happening, Error didn’t answer. This didn’t seem to sway the artist at all.

“The rest of them,” he gestured to the sky filled with similar floating pages, “are all up for grabs! You can pop in whenever you need to, maybe talk to me about it so you don’t tear up one that’s new or something, and destroy whatever ones you need to keep the Multiverse balanced!” His excited orange and green eyelights turned back to the shocked Destroyer. “That way, I can keep Creating, you can keep Destroying, and none of our friends or any of the main AUs are harmed!”

“I… what?” Error shook his head, looking at the messy skeleton incredulously. “You’re just gonna… *let me* destroy shit? What the fuck?” He watched the papers gliding effortlessly in the air. “How the hell do I even do that with these?” he muttered to himself, but Ink heard him anyway.

“Hold on!” Once again, Ink disappeared into a puddle and popped back up seconds later. In his hands, he had another paper. This one was obviously older, its white space slightly yellowed and the lines a bit smudged. With a wave of his hand, the paper expanded into a portal, oddly shaped like a paint stroke. Error watched amazedly as Ink glanced quickly through an abandoned AU before closing the portal and handing the sketch to him.

It looked like a rough Dusttale AU. He couldn’t tell what was different about it from the image displayed at the moment, but he could feel the lack of life just from the paper.

Ink tapped the page with a finger. “All you need to do is tear it,” he said helpfully. “No magic necessary!” He’d had to cancel plenty of AUs before himself in his line of work. There’s been plenty of times he’d have to restart an AU entirely or put a previously ravaged AU out of it’s misery after a rather messy scuffle with Nightmare’s group. It wasn’t common, but it wasn’t rare either.

Plus, sometimes Creators got bored of their worlds and left them to rot. Ink tried to either finish those himself, or, if there wasn’t any living thing in it, destroy them. Apparently, if Error still had to get rid of dead and abandoned AUs, Ink hadn’t been doing as great of a job at that as he thought.

Error stared at the artist, looking for any sign of hesitation or regret. Ink just beamed at him. He could tell the Destroyer didn’t entirely trust it but… Slowly, Error brought his hands to grip the top of the paper, waiting for the other to stop him, before tearing a small slit at the top. When he didn’t get in trouble for that, he ripped a swift line down the center in one movement.

Almost immediately, any energy he felt from the AU was gone.

Ink barely even *blinked*.

Error’s breathing stuttered, gaining a concerned look from the other.

“Are you alri-?”

“You have *no idea*,” Error muttered, crumpling the two torn halves in his fists, “how much fucking weight you just took from my shoulders.” He met the other’s gaze with appreciative eyelights. “Fuck, Ink. Do

you know how much energy it takes to hop through a few dozen AUs, checking their code, and trying to find one to kill, let alone the process of *actually* destroying one from the inside? And now you just," he held up the crumpled sheets. "This is *so much easier.*" For the first time since they met, a genuine smile came over Error's face. Ink met it with one of his own. He didn't say "thank you," but the Protector didn't expect one.

"Of course! And you can pop in here anytime you like! You can even claim a spot in here, if you want!" Ink spun around and pointed to an island with a small cabin on it. "Dream's home is up there." He turned a bit to the left, pointing to something far in the distance. "Sci has a little lab waaaay over there somewhere, since his Universe's timeline is so wacky and he doesn't like losing his progress so much." He then turned around, way faster than Error could keep up with, and gestured the other way. "Reaper doesn't have a house, but he claimed an island out there somewhere. It's got fake plants on it, 'cause he kills the real ones, and a hammock! And Blue-!"

"I get it, Squid," Error interrupted, rolling his eyes.

Ink laughed nervously. "Right. Sorry. But whatever one you wanna grab is yours! I'll add whatever to it, if you want. It's really no problem! Oh! And also!" The hyperactive skeleton dropped his large paintbrush and hurried into his home. Error followed after him slowly, letting the torn remains of the old Dusttale fall to the floor outside.

When he peaked in, he found Ink rummaging through his drawers on the other side of the living room. The place was an absolute disaster of art supplies, making Error cringe. Though, really, he didn't know what he expected from a skeleton who literally had an ink stain on his cheek he never washed off.

With a triumphant shout, the Protector finally found what he was looking for. When he turned back to Error, he held up a small vial of navy blue ink. The dark skeleton tilted his head a bit. "Isn't that what

you gave to Classic?"

"I give one of these to everyone!" he explained, then deflated a bit. "Classic was *supposed* to use it, but whatever! It's for when you need to get into contact with me quickly!"

Error grabbed the little vial skeptically. "Why do I need this?"

"Just in case! It wouldn't hurt to have backup or something, y'know? Just…" Ink paused, squinting in thought. Instinctively, his hand came up to his bare neck before remembering he didn't have his scarf on. He shuffled quickly to a hanger by the front door to grab it. He glanced over the fabric quickly before brightening once again. "Yeah! Spill it to notify me to keep an eye out, smash it if you need me to be there immediately!"

He didn't get a response. Curiously, the artist turned back to his new guest.

Error's eyelights had blanked out, squinted eye sockets staring at the vial held loosely in his hands. He looked extremely overwhelmed. A few new ERROR messages and boxy glitches flared up on his shoulders. Ink suddenly feared he'd said too much in their short time together.

Before Ink could say anything, the other monster clenched the vial in his fist, eyelights flickering back angrily. He sent a glare at the artist.

"Why are you like this?" he growled.

Ink faltered. "Like what?"

“So fucking nice! Just yesterday we were fucking fighting each other, and now you’re treating me like I’m some long time friend?! What the fuck, Squid?!” He threw his hands in front of him, taking a threatening step forward. Ink didn’t move. “Aren’t you concerned even in the *slightest* that I’m in the Doodle Sphere right now? I could have been *lying to you* this whole fucking time. Maybe this was a huge set up! You don’t know! I could walk out this door and string up *every single Universe* right now in seconds, and you’re hardly dressed to stop me! Not to mention, I now have the Doodle Sphere’s code, so even *if* you stopped me, I could just come right back! So *why* are you being so *fucking kind to me!”*

“Do you want me to be mean?” The artist tilted his head like a confused puppy.

“Yes! No? I don’t fuckin’ know!” He scraped his hands down his face in frustration, scrunching up his face. “It’d be smarter if you were!”

Ink shrugged. “Maybe. But since when was I very smart?” He grinned teasingly. “And, besides the fact that Classic vouched for you, *and* that every good Sans has noted your reluctance and trepidation in destroying nowadays, the fact that you’re complaining about it right now?” Stepping forward till he was practically touching noses with the other skeleton, Ink’s grin eased to a relaxed smile. “That’s proof enough. I want to be friends, Error. I have since Blue came running in my house, yelling about how *nice* you were, despite having literally held him hostage.”

“I’ve killed *so many people,* Ink,” he muttered, leaning away from the other but not moving from his spot.

The artist snorted. “So? There’s thousands of Universes, Error. Even in your full on ‘Destroy Everything’ phase, you barely made a dent. And when you did, we brought them back anyways.” The Protector paused

and smiled sheepishly moments later, rubbing the back of his neck. “Don’t tell Dream or Blue I said that. They hate it when I get all ‘save the majority over a few’. Especially Blue…”

Error merely stared at him for a while, watching the messy skeleton’s eyes flicker through colors and shapes with each blink as he rambled on. The vial he held weighed heavily in his hand, but it didn’t scare him as much. He doubted he’d ever need to use the stupid thing, as there was hardly anything that could truly threaten him, but it was… relieving. Stupidly so.

He wasn’t used to kindness being directed at him. At least, not often. Undertale was generally nice to him, and Geno was a good person to talk to, but this was different.

He wasn’t sure how, but it was.

“Thank you,” he mumbled.

Ink immediately stopped talking, looking at him questioningly. “Hm?”

Sputtering, Error turned abruptly and stomped out of the house, quickly pocketing the little blue vial. He hid his quickly warming face in his blue scarf once again. “I said I’m taking the furthest fucking island away from you, Squid!”

The other beamed, throwing his own scarf on hurriedly and following him out. “Really?!” he beamed, hopping up beside the other. “I can make a house on it, if you want! Or a hammock, like Reaper! Oh, and I can put a whole lot of storage on it, like shelves and boxes and cabinets, so you can keep all your materials for sewing here!”

“I- my what?!”

“Classic said you made toys for the kids! And Blue mentioned dolls in your Anti-Void! I just thought-“

“SHUT UP!”

“Whaaat? The Doodle Sphere is all for creating things! I could even help, if you stayed here-“

“I’m not fucking moving in here! I just want a space to get away from shit!”

Ink faltered, looking puzzled. “Isn’t your Anti-Void, like, the ideal place to get away from-?”

“I meant a more-!” Error flapped his hands around in a weird gesture, still looking embarrassed and annoyed. “*Not* white place! Nicer to look at!”

“Aw, you think it’s pretty here? Better than Outertale, or nah?”

“Squid, I swear to the Stars, I will tear your head off and use it for a foot stool.”

~ Bonus! Because I felt like it. ~

“Hello, Dream!”

The Guardian smiled pleasantly at the hyperactive skeleton bounding his way to Ink's front lawn. "Hello, Blue. How are you doing?"

Blue beamed. "Good! The human's on a pacifist run right now, I think! They just passed through Snowdin, so I have a while to relax before I need to interfere in theirs and Alphys' fight. Plus, Paps hasn't smoked at *all* today, which is amazing! I think him and the human are onto something about stopping the Resets — I was gonna ask Ink about it later!"

Dream chuckled. "You might want to do that sooner rather than later. Stars knows when he'll forget, if he does know."

Pausing, the other nodded thoughtfully. "Maybe I'll bring it up during the meeting then!"

"Probably for the best."

"Heya, babes," a slick voice said behind them. The pair turned to find Lust and Red both stepping out of their own portals. Red nodded a greeting, picking at his gold tooth with a claw before heading to his usual beanbag. Lust happily waltzed up to them. "How're my favorite Stars doin'?"

The three exchanged pleasantries, chatting as they made their way to their usual spots. Most of their seating had been dragged out ahead of time, scattered around the lawn as usual. The others were slowly trickling in, so they all had time to chat beforehand. Blue soon separated from Dream and Lust when Razz showed up, happily pulling the grumpy Fell monster into a big hug. Razz yelled at him, but didn't move to push him off, as usual. The others laughed at the sight.

Eventually, everyone but the Protector himself was present, talking together animatedly while they waited. Even Classic was there, practically sleeping on the grass by Red's feet, halfheartedly exchanging puns with him, Comet, and Reaper. Dream thought for sure he was supposed to still be in his Universe waiting for Error as planned, but figured he'd ask later. It couldn't hurt to have the skeleton there for a few hours.

"Ink is coming today, correct?" King asked, sitting properly in a chair on the porch by Dream. The Guardian nodded in response.

"He should be." Looking behind him at the house, Dream debated going inside to look for the skeleton. Ink was one of the few monsters Dream, unfortunately, couldn't feel the emotions of, so he actually wasn't sure if the other was even there at the moment.

"He might've forgotten," Falcon suggested, peaked his head over the edge of the roof to look at them upside down. He was sprawled out on his stomach, wings practically covering the entirety of the roof. "It wouldn't be the first time."

"Or the second," Red muttered. "Or third, or fourth…"

Dream smiled a bit nervously. "I'll go make sure he-"

"I *promise*, it'll be fine!" they heard from the distance. Most the Sanses turned to face the new voice, obviously belonging to Ink. They couldn't see the Protector yet, likely lost in the weirdly colored foliage surrounding the area, but it was a relief to know he was actually coming. Dream took special interest in the feeling of *anxiousness, fear,* and *annoyance* from the same direction. "Classic is there, and Blue will be glad to see you!"

Classic snorted on the floor, a brief flicker of understanding passing over his expression before he laid back down.

Dream barely heard a deeper voice mutter something back to Ink, gaining a happy laugh in response.

A faint wave of *happy, calm,* and *amusement* flickered through the previous feelings, but they were quickly squashed down.

Before he could question any further, the artist appeared from around a corner of violet bushes, walking backwards and grinning madly. His paint brush was missing, likely still in the house, but he was otherwise fully dressed in his usual outfit. Another figure appeared from the path immediately afterwards.

Any chatter that was still happening immediately quieted.

Ink happily spun on his heels, downing a gulp of his yellow paint as he made his way over to the gathered Sanses. Error followed behind him, much less enthusiastic about it all. As soon as he noticed the many eyelights on him, his expression soured.

“Stop fuckin’ staring at me,” he hissed, crossing his arms defensively.

“Error’s joining us today!” Ink announced obliviously, smiling at the group. His yellow and pink eyelights to the glitchy skeleton. “You can sit anywhere you want! We always just have our meetings outside.”

Error sent him a disbelieving glance. “What? What kind of fucking Multiverse meeting is held on beanbags and shit?”

The other barely blinked. “Our Multiverse meetings! It’s more comfortable this way!”

“Sorry we’re not as fancy as King Stick-Up-His-Ass and his gang,” Red growled, sitting up threateningly. “I don’t think you’re really inna place to judge our shit, right now, prick.”

Barely giving him a glance, Error rolled his eyes. “Yeah, whatever. Stick with making chocolate. Your threats are shit.”

Red sputtered, but Classic sat up to hold the enraged skeleton down in his seat. The OG turned an amused glance at his friend. “Hey, Error.”

“Sup.”

“Ink,” Dream hissed lowly, leaning over to where the Protector was walking up to the porch. “What the hell? You let the Destroyer in the Doodle Sphere?!”

“Yeah!” Ink smiled. “You didn’t notice? He’s been here for like, the last three days.”

“What?!”

“Ah, I guess that makes sense, actually.” The other rubbed his chin in thought, ignoring Dream’s bewildered expression. “He’s been staying on his island, mostly. When he actually is here, at least. He let me make him a TV for it!”

“Ink!”

“Yeah?”

Dream took a breath, glancing at the glitchy skeleton with suspicion and concern. Error had moved away from the pair a bit, stringing up his own personal, netted swing from the paper tree in Ink’s yard. It was a little distanced from the rest of them, closest only to Classic and Red. He sat, swinging in it lazily. In their time talking, Blue and Reaper had migrated to their side as well, equally as confused and wanting to hear the explanation. “You let the Destroyer have absolute access to *every universe* in the Multiverse,” Dream stated, watching said Destroyer banter with the two skeletons nearest to him. “And, you did so *without informing me*. Do you realize what he can do?”

Ink blinked, eyelights flickering to a blue square and purple question mark. “Um. Destroy?”

“Yes!”

“It does seem rather…” Reaper swirled a skeletal hand in thought, “*bizarre* that you’d just… let him in on a whim all of a sudden.”

“Did you two talk?” Blue asked hopefully.

Immediately brightening, Ink spun around. “Oh yeah! That’s right! Error and I made a truce!”

There was a pregnant pause amongst the group, broken by both Red

and Razz yelling “WHAT?!” simultaneously.

Dream himself sputtered incredulously behind him.

“Uh, hun, maybe *start* with that next time, yeah?” Lust muttered.

“That’s assuming there will be a next time,” Dance added, rubbing his face in exasperation.

“Knowing Ink, there will be.”

“That’s great!” Blue exclaimed joyfully, hopping from his spot near the Protector. He smiled brightly at Error, quickly making his way over to the swing. “I’m so glad we settled everything! Oh, this is so exciting! Mweheheh!”

Error leaned away a bit, raising a nervous brow. “Yeah. Exciting.”

“So you are no longer destroying then?” King asked, surprised.

“Oh, no, he still has to.” Ink shook his head. This earned a few concerned looks, all pretty much ignored. “We came up with a middle ground, though! He can destroy whatever Universe he needs to as long as it’s not brand new, or one of the main ones I grouped together, which includes everyone here and the Bad Sanses!”

“Wait, so he’s still killing shit?” Red yelled, throwing his arms out.

Classic shrugged. “Gotta keep the balance, apparently.”

Dream blinked, shaking his head confusedly. “Balance? What balance?”

“Actually…” Reaper rubbed his chin thoughtfully. “That *does* make sense. If there has to be a Guardian for Negativity and Positivity, and a god for death and life, it would be understandable for the Protector and the Destroyer to be balancing forces as well. They’re both needed equally to keep the worlds stable.”

“Exactly!” Ink beamed.

“And you didn’t know about this *before?*” Razz muttered accusingly.

“… Exactly!”

“Fucking hell,” Red grumbled under his breath. “Both of you are fucking idiots.”

Error sputtered. “How the fuck am I an idiot, asshole! I’m the one that fucking knew about it!”

“And yet ya never said *shit!”*

“He’s gotta point,” Classic snickered. “Had ya said something, this all could have been avoided.”

Both Destroyer and Protector had nothing to say to that.

“I’m feelin’ *real* safe in this Multiverse,” Falcon said, his voice practically dripping with sarcasm. “I mean, wow, I felt safe before. But this? Nothing can kill us now.”

His face burning a yellow hue, Error slouched in his swing and pulled his scarf up. “Shut the fuck up!”

With a slightly embarrassed giggled, Ink rubbed the back of his neck and said, “Ahaha, let’s, uh, start the meeting, maybe?”

Dream laid his face in his palms, sighing dramatically. “Please do. I need to go home and question my friendships.”

“Hey!”

End Notes

I feel like this ain't great, but I'll post it anyway.

The bonus was just my dramatic ass wanting Error to get dragged to a meeting after everything. Completely unnecessary and a bit lazy? Yes. Do I care? Nope.

Edit: I knew I forgot something fbsjbd sorry I was tired when I posted this lmao.
HMU if you wanna:
Instagrams:
paintedkinzy18
nerdykinzy18
Tumblr:
painted-kinzy88
Lil Deviantart (purely so I can post art I can actually put up in AO3):
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